THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) The passport issuance process in all Passport Offices in India is fully computerised. Several measures that have been taken to make the system more foolproof include issuance of machine-readable passports, computerisation of work process and setting up a central database for the purpose of checking and verification.

(b) to (d) Not applicable.

Bypass on NH-3

469. SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD
TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Gwalior city by-pass on National Highway No. 3 is proposed to be built;

(b) if so, by when construction work is likely to be undertaken; and

(c) the target fixed for completion of work?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The construction work is likely to be undertaken by April, 2006 and completed within a period of 24 months.

Clean-up drive by NHAI

470. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
SHRIMATI JAMANA DEVI BARUPAL: '

Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether National Highways Authority of India has launched a cleanup drive to strengthen internal processes and equip itself better to handle subsequent phases of prestigious National Highways Development Project;

(b) if so, whether seven contracts have been terminated due to poor performance and fraudulent practices by both Indian and foreign companies;

(c) if so, whether standardized documents performance guarantees, penalty clauses and third party audit's are some measures taken to ensure quality work; and

(d) if so, to what extent these measures have helped in moving fast in cleaning up these projects?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA): (a) National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has been making countinuous efforts to streamline internal process.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) It is expected that the measures adopted will smoothen the expedite the award and implementation of projects and also will help to maintain quality.

Connectivity of North-Eastern Region

471. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether State capitals in the North-Eastern Regions are proposed to be connected with by motorable roads with National Capital and also connected with each other; and

(b) if so, the status of the construction of National Highways in the North-Eastern Region which when completed would give connectivity with State Capital of seven States with Delhi and other State Capitals *Inter-se?*

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA): (a) and (b) the State capital in the North-Eastern Region are already connected with each other and with the National Capital with National Highways. These National Highways (NHs) are being maintained in traffic worthy condition from within available resources. Further improvement/upgradation of these NHs "have been proposed under the National Highway Development Project (NHDP) Phase III and Special Accelerated Road Development Programme in the North-Eastern Region (SARDP-NE) in two phases.

Sethu Samudram Project

472. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Sethu Samudram Project was launched recently;